
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Executive Order 48

DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY DUE TO TORNADO AND SEVERE STORM DAMAGE ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

Between May 8 and May 10, 2003, a major weather system moved through the Commonwealth of Virginia bringing tornadoes, hail storms, heavy wind and rain, and flash flooding to many communities. Aerial surveys found that the high winds left a nearly continuous path of damage for more than 100 miles from central to southeast Virginia. The National Weather Service has confirmed that tornadoes were the cause of severe damage in at least two counties in central Virginia. Flash flooding occurred in Southwest Virginia with severe impacts in Scott County. The storms caused destruction of property and infrastructure, and created a crisis for thousands of citizens sheltered in their homes, schools, and places of employment. The areas of direct impact from these tornadoes, severe storms, and flooding include the counties of Albemarle, Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Scott, Southampton, and Sussex.

The health and general welfare of the citizens of the localities that are affected required that state action be taken to help alleviate the conditions resulting from this situation. I feel that the effects of these significant storm systems and subsequent damage constitute a natural disaster wherein human life and public and private property are imperiled, as described in § 44-146.16 of the *Code of Virginia*.

Therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by § 44-146.17 of the *Code of Virginia*, as Governor and as Director of Emergency Management, and by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia and by §44-75.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the Commonwealth, and subject always to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby proclaim that a state of emergency exists and direct that appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of both state and local governments to alleviate any conditions resulting from storm impact, damage and

flooding, and to implement recovery and mitigation operations and activities so as to return impacted areas to pre-event conditions insofar as possible.

In order to marshal all public resources and appropriate preparedness, response and recovery measures to meet this potential threat and recover from its effects, and in accordance with my authority contained in §44-146.17 of the Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, I hereby order the following protective and restoration measures:

- A. The implementation by agencies of the state and local governments of Volumes 1 (Basic Plan), Volume 2 (Disaster Recovery Plan) and Volume 4 (Hazardous Materials) of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP), as amended, along with other appropriate state agency plans.
- B. Activation of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and State Emergency Response Team (SERT). Furthermore, I am directing that the VEOC and SERT coordinate state operations in support of affected localities and the Commonwealth, to include issuing mission assignments to agencies designated in the COVEOP and others that may be identified by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, in consultation with the Secretary of Public Safety, which are needed to provide for the preservation of life, protection of property, and implementation of recovery activities.
- C. The authorization to assume control over the Commonwealth's state-operated telecommunications systems, as required by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, in coordination with the Department of Information Technology and the Secretary of Public Safety, making all systems assets available for use in providing adequate communications, intelligence and warning capabilities for the event, pursuant to §44-146.18 of the *Code of Virginia*.
- D. The activation, implementation and coordination of appropriate mutual aid agreements and compacts, including the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, and the authorization of the State Coordinator of Emergency Management to enter into any other supplemental agreements, pursuant to §§ 44-146.17(5) and 44-146.28:1 of the *Code of Virginia*, to provide for the evacuation and reception of injured and other persons and the exchange of medical, fire, police, public utility, reconnaissance, welfare, transportation and communications personnel, and equipment and supplies. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management is hereby designated as Virginia's authorized representative within the meaning of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, §44-146.28:1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

- E. The authorization of the Departments of State Police, Transportation, and Motor Vehicles to grant temporary overweight, overwidth, registration, or license exemptions to carriers transporting essential emergency relief supplies into and through the Commonwealth in order to support the disaster response and recovery.

The axle and gross weights shown below are the maximum allowed, unless otherwise posted.

Any One Axle	24,000 Pounds
Tandem Axles (more than 40 inches but not more than 96 inches spacing between axle centers)	44,000 Pounds
Single Unit (2 Axles)	44,000 Pounds
Single Unit (3 Axles)	54,500 Pounds
Tractor-Semitrailer (4 Axles)	64,500 Pounds
Tractor-Semitrailer (5 or more Axles)	90,000 Pounds
Tractor-Twin Trailers (5 or more Axles)	90,000 Pounds
Other Combinations (5 or more Axles)	90,000 Pounds
Per Inch of Tire Width in Contact with Road Surface	850 Pounds

All overwidth loads, up to a maximum of 16 feet, must follow Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) hauling permit and safety guidelines.

In addition to described overweight/overwidth transportation privileges, carriers are also exempt from registration with the Department of Motor Vehicles. This includes the vehicles en route and returning to their home base. The above-cited agencies shall communicate this information to all staff responsible for permit issuance and truck legalization enforcement.

This authorization shall apply to hours worked by any carrier when transporting passengers, property, equipment, food, fuel, construction materials, and other critical supplies to or from any portion of the Commonwealth for purpose of providing relief or assistance as a result of this disaster, pursuant to §52-8.4 of the *Code of Virginia*.

The foregoing overweight/overwidth transportation privileges as well as the regulatory exemption provided by §52-8.4.A of the *Code of Virginia*, and implemented in §19 VAC 30-20-40.B of the "Motor Carrier Safety Regulations," shall remain in effect for 30 days from the onset of the disaster, or until emergency relief is no longer necessary, as determined by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management in consultation with the Virginia Department of Transportation, whichever is earlier.

- F. The discontinuance of provisions authorized in paragraph E above may be implemented and disseminated by administrative notice to affected and interested parties by the authority I hereby delegate to the State Coordinator of Emergency Management after consultation with other affected state agencies.
- G. The authorization of appropriate oversight boards, commissions and agencies to ease building code restrictions, and to permit emergency demolition, hazardous waste disposal, debris removal, emergency landfill siting and operations and other activities necessary to address immediate health and safety needs without regard to time-consuming procedures or formalities and without regard to application or permit fees or royalties. This state of emergency constitutes a major medical emergency under the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Health Governing Emergency Medical Services, pursuant to Article 3.01 (§32.1-111.1 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 32.1, of the *Code of Virginia*, Statewide Emergency Medical Services System and Services, and exemptions specified in the Rules and Regulations regarding patient transport and provider certification in disasters apply.
- H. The implementation by public agencies under my supervision and control of their emergency assignments as directed in the COVEOP without regard to normal procedures pertaining to performance of public work, entering into contracts, incurring of obligations, or other logistical and support measures of the Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, as provided in §44-146.28 (b) of the *Code of Virginia*. Section 44-146.24 of the *Code of Virginia* also applies to the disaster activities of state agencies.
- I. Designation of members and personnel of volunteer, auxiliary and reserve groups including search and rescue (SAR), Virginia Associations of Volunteer Rescue Squads (VAVRS), Civil Air Patrol (CAP), member organizations of the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES), volunteer fire fighters, and others identified and tasked by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management for specific disaster-related mission assignments as representatives of the Commonwealth engaged in emergency services activities within the meaning of the immunity provisions of §44-146.23 (a) of the *Code of Virginia*, in the performance of their specific disaster-related mission assignments.

Upon my approval, the costs incurred by state agencies and other agents in performing mission assignments through the VEOC of the Commonwealth as defined herein and in §44-146.28 of the *Code of Virginia* in performing these missions shall be paid out of the sum sufficient appropriation for Disaster Planning and Operations contained in Item 47 of Chapter 899, 2002 Virginia Acts of Assembly.

This Executive Order shall be effective retroactive to May 8, 2003, and shall remain in full force and effect until June 30, 2003, unless sooner amended or rescinded by further executive order. Termination of the Executive Order is not intended to terminate any Federal-type benefits granted or to be granted due to injury or death as a result of service under this Executive Order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 28th day of May 2003.

Mark R. Warner, Governor

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Commonwealth